

# Children, Youth & Family Consortium

## CYFC Monthly

### CYFC Monthly — December 2015

#### CYFC Receives Mini Grant for Work at Bruce Vento School

By Judy Myers, Extension Educator — CYFC

Extension educators Sara Langworthy and Judy Myers, University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development Children, Youth & Family Consortium (CYFC) received an [Institute on the Environment](#) (IonE) mini grant to advance the partnership work with [Bruce Vento Elementary School](#) in East St. Paul. The IonE mini grant will enable those of us in CYFC to develop an expert-led, research-informed plan for the creation and implementation of natural learning spaces at the school. This plan will lead us in our efforts to approach potential funders, leverage existing partner resources, and thoughtfully engage with the East St. Paul community to support the establishment of natural learning spaces both inside and outside the school building.

Educational success can be elusive despite schools' increasing efforts to meet diverse learning needs. Many students who experience overwhelming opportunity gaps and chronic stress in their homes, schools, and communities continue to fall behind in school despite efforts to boost achievement through increased class time on core subjects. Chronic stress disrupts children's brain development and can lead to negative adult health outcomes. Yet research suggests that exposure to natural spaces can be therapeutic for young children facing chronic stress and trauma (S. Masini, personal communication, 2014).

Our goal is to increase wellness, student-learning, and the health of students at the school. Over the next 9 to 12 months we will hold 8 to 10 partner meetings with horticulture, interior design, therapeutic learning experts to create a detailed plan for the creation and implementation of natural learning spaces. This will be done by:

- Discussing partners' organizational resources and exploring potential grant or private funding opportunities to support the implementation of natural learning spaces.
- Developing a plan for engaging with Bruce Vento staff, students, and surrounding community to help inform the design of natural learning spaces.
- Approaching potential partner organizations or vendors who could inform or support the creation and implementation process.

As noted, we hope to create natural learning spaces both inside and outside the school building. There is little natural light within the building, and the school grounds are barren fields of grass. Therefore, we are researching ways to introduce natural elements into the building, as well as build outdoor therapeutic learning spaces for the students at the school.

This project will be accomplished through partnerships across disciplines within the University and engagement with community organizations and Saint Paul Public Schools staff. Integrating research-based

solutions and community wisdom in the development of these learning spaces can help to address the grand challenge of the achievement gap and promote student learning and well-being.

## Sources

Adevi, A. A., & Martensson, F. (2013). Stress rehabilitation through garden therapy: The garden as a place in the recovery from stress. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 12(2), 230-237.

National Opportunity to Learn Campaign. (n.d.). *Opportunity Gap*. Retrieved from <http://www.otlcampaign.org/sites/default/files/resources/Opportunity%20Gap%20Toolkit%20FINAL.pdf>

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2014, January). *Excessive stress disrupts the architecture of the developing brain: Working paper No. 3*. Retrieved from Center on the Developing Child Harvard University <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/wp3/>

## Consortium News

### CYFC's Sara Langworthy Interviewed on BAm Radio

[Sara Langworthy, Ph.D.](#), along with psychology professor [Ross Thompson, Ph.D.](#) and early education administrator [Heidi Veal](#), was featured in a BAm Radio interview with Rae Pica to address how educators can work with children facing adversity that teachers have never experienced. Listen to the interview on the [BAm Radio Network website](#).

### Providing Doula Care to Pregnant Incarcerated Women — Video

CYFC's Sara Langworthy recently created a [brief video](#) on the [Minnesota Prison Doula Project](#), providers of doula care and education services for incarcerated women in Minnesota. The video features [Rebecca Shlafer, Ph.D.](#), assistant professor and research director of the MN Prison Doula Project, [Erica Gerrity, LICSW](#), MN Prison Doula Project executive director and [Raelene Baker](#), MN Prison Doula Project program coordinator.

## Center for Family Development Announcements

### Challenges, Opportunities, and Resources for Parents Living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder — Webinar

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development and Military Families Learning Network

Date: February 17, 2016

Cost: Free; registration required

Location: Online

[Michelle D. Sherman, Ph.D.](#) will present tools and resources for professionals who work with military families to help veteran parents living with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) talk about their feelings and experiences with their children. Participants will better understand the impact PTSD has on youth, learn about resources for veteran parents and their children regarding parental PTSD, and hear ways providers can support veteran parents. Learn more and register on the [Military Families Learning Network website](#).

### Being Successful with Coparenting — Resources for Parents Experiencing Divorce or Separation

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Extension Center for Family Development

[With Kids and Divorce, There's More Than a "Day" in Holiday](#)

Holidays may provoke intense, emotional responses — especially in the first year after a family transition such as divorce, separation, or a change in custody. Read how parents living apart can try to help ease possible difficulties of celebrating holidays as they coparent their children.

### [New Families and Traditions](#)

Forming a new family creates unique challenges and opportunities to create new traditions. Read how communication, negotiation, and compromise are important to consider as you plan your holiday events.

### [Holiday Gifts when Parents are Divorced](#)

Find tips to help reducing gift-related conflict when parenting apart.

## University & Community Announcements

### **Reflective Process: Concepts and Application — Workshop**

Sponsor: Minnesota Association for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health, a division of Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health (MACMH)

Date: January 27, 2016

Cost: \$75.65 before December 27, \$89 after

Location: St. Paul, MN

Credits: Three continuing education units

Learn how the reflective process can apply to your work with children and their families. During this introductory training, participants will learn principals and theoretical foundation for supporting and maintaining a thoughtful, compassionate, and empowering stance. Learn more and register on the [MCAMH website](#).

### **Working Together in the Best Interest of Young Children and their Families: The Art and Science of Interdisciplinary Collaboration — Workshop**

Sponsor: Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health (MACMH)

Cost: \$151.30 before December 20, \$179 after

Location: Woodbury, MN

Join [Jane Ellison, LMFT, IMH-E® \(IV\)](#) and [Michele Fallon, LICSW, IMH-E® \(IV\)](#), to learn practical strategies for when and how to invite other professionals to collaborate with you to optimize your work. Participants will understand their role in promoting the mental health of children, ages prenatal to five, their parents, and caregivers. Learn more and register on the [MACMH website](#).

### **Working with Parents of Young Children: Considerations for Special Populations — Course**

Sponsor: University of Minnesota Center for Early Education and Development (CEED)

Date: February 8-April 22, 2016

Cost: \$800

Location: Online

Credits: Two academic credits or a continuing education certificate (84 clock hours)

Join [Tracy Schreifels, MS, LMFT, IMH-E® \(III\)](#) in examining considerations of how infant mental health research informs work with parents with mental illness, chemical dependency, trauma, and cognitive delays, and parents of children with special needs. Participants will also learn about adult attachment and how parenting changes with child development. Learn more and register on the [CEED website](#).

**Trauma-Informed Practice is “Attachment Savvy”: Focus on Family Engagement — Training**

Sponsor: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation

Date: January 29, 2016

Cost: \$65-75

Location: St. Paul, MN

Credits: Three continuing education units

Learn how to engage and work with children, teens, and their families who have experienced complex trauma. Get practical ideas on how to maintain family engagement throughout the course of services, maintain systemic boundaries, and get tips to reinforce attachment between family members. Learn more and register on the [Wilder website](#).

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